

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01  
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02  
SS-15 USIA-06 MCT-01 IO-13 OMB-01 DHA-02 ACDA-07  
/080 W

-----141559Z 072505 /41

P R 141511Z APR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3667  
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA  
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT  
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 1689

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT, LE, PLO, IS  
SUBJECT: MASSACRE AT KHIAM

REF: (A) TEL AVIV 2577, (B) TEL AVIV 2609

1. IN LIGHT OF SHRILL ISRAELI STATEMENTS ABOUT THE DANGER OF  
MASSACRES IN SOUTH LEBANON AND SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO KHIAM  
IN EVRON PRESENTATION (REFTEL A), WE HAVE PUT TOGETHER ALL  
WE CAN LEARN ABOUT THE INCIDENTS THAT HAVE OCCURRED THERE.

2. KHIAM IS A BASICALLY GREEK ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN VILLAGE,  
BUT IS ALSO THE HOME OF THE PROMINENT CONSERVATIVE SHIA  
ABDULLAH FAMILY. THE ABDULLAHS WERE POPULARLY KNOWN AS ANTI-  
LEFTIST, ANTI-PALESTINIAN, INCLINED TO COOPERATE WITH THE  
ISRAELIS, AND HAD FOUGHT ON THE SIDE OF CHRISTIAN ELEMENTS IN  
THE REGION.

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3. ACCORDING TO A MUSLIM LEBANESE ARMY SOLDIER WHO  
RETURNED FROM KHIAM TO BEIRUT ABOUT APR 11, SIX MEMBERS  
OF THE ABDULLAH FAMILY WERE KILLED AFTER PALESTINIAN  
AND/OR LEBANESE LEFTIST ELEMENTS TOOK THE VILLAGE IN  
COMBAT ON APR 7. THE CADAVERS WERE BROUGHT TO THE  
ARMY BARRACKS AT KHIAM (BY THAT TIME ALSO UNDER LAA/

PALESTINIAN CONTROL). IN ADDITION, THREE HOMES OWNED BY ABDULLAH FAMILY MEMBERS -- ONE A FORMER DEPUTY, ONE A FORMER MAYOR, AND ONE A FORMER AMBASSADOR -- WERE BURNED AND DESTROYED. THIS ACCOUNT IS CONFIRMED BY UPI REPORTING FROM TEL AVIV APR 12. REPORTS CIRCULATING IN BEIRUT CHRISTIAN CIRCLES THAT 30 MEMBERS OF THE ABDULLAH FAMILY WERE KILLED APPEAR TO BE EXAGGERATED.

4. ALTHOUGH IT IS PLAUSIBLE THAT THE ABDULLAHS WERE KILLED BY PALESTINIAN OR LEFTIST COMBATANTS AFTER THEY WERE CAPTURED, ONE SOUTHERNOR, AHMAD AL ASHI, A SHIITE FROM THE SOUTH AND CONSERVATIVE JOURNALIST, WHO HAS TALKED TO VISITORS FROM THE SOUTH IN RECENT DAYS, HAS TOLD AN EMBASSY EMPLOYEE THAT THE KILLING WAS DONE BY PEASANTS IN THE AREA, THE ABDULLAHS BEING WEALTHY LANDLORDS. ANOTHER SOUTHERNOR, WAJIH RADWAN, CLAIMS TO KNOW THAT THEY WERE KILLED NOT BY PALESTINIANS BUT BY LOCAL LEFTISTS. FINALLY, BOTH AN EMBASSY EMPLOYEE, WHO IS HIMSELF A SHIA FROM THE SOUTH AND HAS A SISTER LIVING IN TAIBE, AND FUAD AL ASHI, BROTHER OF AHMED, CLAIM THAT THE ABDULLAHS WERE KILLED BECAUSE THEY HAD PARTICIPATED WITH THE CHRISTIANS IN THE EARLIER ATTACK ON TAIBE (MAR 29-30) AND, TOGETHER WITH THE CHRISTIANS, HAD RAPED ABOUT 40 GIRLS IN TAIBE.

5. ACCORDING TO THE AFOREMENTIONED LEBANESE ARMY SOURCE, 12 CHRISTIANS IN DIBBIN (BETWEEN KHIAM AND QULAYAH) WERE FOUND DEAD. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THEY WERE MASSACRED, BUT IT IS EQUALLY POSSIBLE, IN THE SOURCE'S VIEW, THAT THEY

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WERE KILLED IN THE COURSE OF COMBAT.

6. COMMENT: WE DO NOT HAVE THE WHOLE STORY, BUT CERTAIN CONSIDERATIONS SHOULD BE POINTED OUT:

A. WE CAN ONLY CONFIRM THAT SIX PERSONS WERE MASSACRED. THEY WERE ALL SHIAS, NOT CHRISTIANS.

B. THERE ARE PLAUSIBLE NON-SECTARIAN MOTIVES FOR THE MASSACRE, INCLUDING COLLABORATION WITH A FOREIGN POWER, SOCIAL (CLASS) ANIMUS, AND SIMPLE MAYHEM.

C. WE CANNOT CONFIRM THAT THE MASSACRE WAS DONE BY PALESTINIANS. IT IS AT LEAST EQUALLY POSSIBLE THAT IT WAS DONE BY OTHER LEBANESE, AND AT LEAST FOUR SOUTHERNORS LIVING IN BEIRUT ARE OF THIS OPINION.

D. WE CANNOT CONFIRM THAT 12 CHRISTIANS IN DIBBIN WERE MASSACRED, ALTHOUGH IT IS CERTAINLY POSSIBLE.

7. THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT MAY HAVE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, BUT THE INFORMATION AVAILABLE IN BEIRUT DOES NOT REPEAT NOT SUGGEST A PALESTINIAN MASSACRE OF CHRISTIANS. IT DOES SUGGEST THAT THE FIGHTING IN LEBANON HAS ONCE AGAIN, AS SO OFTEN IN THE PAST, PROVIDED AN OUTLET FOR VIOLENCE BASED ON PERSONAL HATREDS, ONLY TANGENTALLY RELATED TO THE ISSUES OF THE WAR. WE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHAT HARD EVIDENCE THE ISRAELIS HAVE TO JUSTIFY THEIR ALLUSIONS TO MASSACRES OF CHRISTIANS BY PALESTINIANS. IN THE ABSENCE OF SUCH INFORMATION, WE URGE THAT ALL SUCH STORIES BE TREATED WITH CAUTION SINCE THEY MAY BE BASED ON SCANT EVIDENCE AND DESIGNED TO INFLAME HATREDS IN LEBANON FOR OBVIOUS SELF-SERVING ENDS.  
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## Message Attributes

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